

Amendments to the Claims: This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A process of dehumidification and of injection and moulding for granulated ~~plasties~~plastic materials, comprising a dehumidification step ~~(1a)~~—in which the granules are dehumidified by contact with air at a dehumidification temperature, and a subsequent injection and moulding step ~~(1b)~~—in which the granules coming from the dehumidification step are heated to a moulding temperature higher than the dehumidification temperature and are then injected into a mould, ~~characterized in that, and~~ between the dehumidification step and the injection and moulding step, a heating step ~~(20)~~—is provided, in which the granules are heated, in a substantial absence of oxygen, to a supply temperature between the dehumidification temperature and the moulding temperature.

2. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The method according to Claim 1 in which, in the heating step ~~(20)~~, the granules are heated by contact with a substantially oxygen-free inert gas.

3. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The method according to Claim 2 in which the inert gas is technical nitrogen.

4. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The method according to Claim 1 ~~or Claim 2~~ in which the granules are heated in a substantial absence of oxygen by an gas is oxygen-impoverished air obtained by means of a step of recirculation of the air in a closed circuit at high temperature, in which the air is put in contact with the granules.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The method according to Claim 4 in which the air is derived from the air which is used in the step for the dehumidification of the granules.

6. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The method according to ~~one or more of the preceding claims~~claim 1 in which the supply temperature is lower than the softening point of the granules.

7. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The method according to ~~one or more of the preceding claims~~claim 1 in which the ~~plastics~~plastic material is based on polyethylene terephthalate.

8. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The method according to Claim 7 in which the supply temperature is between 200°C and 250°C.

9. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The method according to Claim 8 in which the supply temperature is between 220°C and 230°C.

10. (Currently Amended) A plant ~~{1}~~ for the dehumidification and the injection and moulding of granulated ~~plastics~~plastic materials, comprising a unit ~~{1a}~~ for dehumidifying the granules by means of process air, in which the granules are heated to a dehumidification temperature, and a unit ~~{1b}~~ for injecting and moulding the granules coming from the dehumidification unit, in which the granules are brought to a moulding temperature higher than the dehumidification temperature, and ~~characterized in that,~~ between the dehumidification unit and the injection and moulding unit, granule-heating means ~~{20}~~ are provided for heating the granules in a substantial absence of oxygen, to a supply temperature between the dehumidification temperature and the moulding temperature.

11. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The plant according to Claim 10 in which the granule-heating means ~~{20}~~ comprise a hopper ~~{21}~~ and a circuit ~~{22}~~ for the heating and admission of a hot inert gas into the hopper ~~{21}~~ in order to heat the granules contained therein to the supply temperature.

12. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The plant according to Claim 11 in which a connection ~~{31}~~ is provided between a circuit ~~{4}~~ of the process air used in the unit ~~{1a}~~ for dehumidifying the granules and the circuit ~~{22}~~ for heating and admitting the gas to the hopper ~~{21}~~.

13. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The plant according to Claim 11 ~~or Claim 12~~ in which the hot inert gas is admitted to the hopper ~~{21}~~ as a counter-current relative to the granules.

14. (New) The method according to claim 2 in which the gas is oxygen-impoverished air obtained by means of a step of recirculation of the air in a closed circuit at high temperature, in which the air is put in contact with the granules.

15. (New) The method according to claim 2 in which the supply temperature is lower than the softening point of the granules.

16. (New) The method according to claim 3 in which the supply temperature is lower than the softening point of the granules.

17. (New) The method according to claim 4 in which the supply temperature is lower than the softening point of the granules.

18. (New) The method according to claim 5 in which the supply temperature is lower than the softening point of the granules.

19. (New) The method according to claim 2 in which the plastic material is based on polyethylene terephthalate.

20. (New) The plant according to claim 12 in which the hot inert gas is admitted to the hopper as a counter-current relative to the granules.